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THE GENTLEWOMAN OF THE LAST CENTURY.

Is the days of my childhood, not long after the present century commenced, I dwelt in the midst of a populous city; it was a manufacturing city to boot, where the atmosphere was close, rain frequent, and the sky constantly darkened with sooty clouds. Business seemed the all-engrossing thought of the throng that hurried along its streets. Long straggling suburbs extended round the town in all directions; and even the beautiful winding river was pent up by shipping, with all its toilsome adjuncts of quays and crowds.

Since those days, having lived almost exclusively in the country, I have learned to pity the young light-hearted nurslings, cooped up, as I then was, amid the smoke, murkiness, and turmoil of a town, instead of being free to roam through flowery meadows, or gather sea-shells on the cheerful shore. And yet my early days were happy enough. Childhood, in its buoyancy and pliability, so easily learns to adapt itself to necessary circumstances, that, provided those circumstances are made the most of, the young human plants will often spring forth as vigorously, amid dust and smoke, as if the dews and sunshine of heaven had been more lavishly bestowed upon them. They may not, indeed, after a time, put forth so many healthful buds of promise, but there are less obvious influences at work, perchance more than compensating to the unfolding mind for what is denied to the physical frame, and thus tending to the elaboration of a more graceful and even more perfect character—just as the conservatory exotic, when compared with the daisy, is the more valuable, more lovely, more fragrant plant. I was a delicate flower myself, and needed much patient tending; and though the result has not been so rewarding as the previous remark might lead the thinking reader to expect, still it came to pass that I was early accustomed to observe things around me keenly, to ponder them carefully, and to impress on my memory many of their minutest particulars. Hence the following sketch of a character not now to be met with—a last link, within my observation, of a state of society that somewhat rapidly disappeared at the end of the last century, to be succeeded by a phase so very distinct, and even opposite, that the two might seem to belong to countries distant from each other. The unprecedentedly rapid influx of wealth, the long strides taken in the progress of education, science, and art, no doubt induced this change; but so like to the shifting of a panoramic scene has been its development, it seems to me but a short and flitting, though vivid dream, my ever coming into contact with

such a personage as the gentlewoman of the by-past century. Some such characters are portrayed by Richardson and Addison; but then the pictures drawn by those master-minds were in appropriate framework—the colouring and grouping were all in complete keeping; while here, in my experience, was an antique gem in modern gilding, a solitary skeleton amidst a wreck, a disjointed fragment of an older world; and it is this circumstance that has flung over the subject of my sketch a veil of gracious melancholy, softening all the harder outlines of a character that might, under other influences, have been one to be deeply cherished and admired, instead of becoming only an object of interest to one moping, sickly child.

The street of the city aforesaid, in which was my home, was not one of the principal thoroughfares. It led across between two of the second-rate streets, both of which ascended to the north pretty steeply, while ours lay, as it were, at the base. It was not from this position, however, that it was called Hill Street, but from the name of the owner of the earliest built and principal house, which was situated exactly opposite ours on the south side—having, therefore, the northern exposure. On our side, the street was filled up with a close row of goodly and comfortable dwellings. On the other, the frontage had never been built on, and there consequently remained, somewhat sunk below the causeway, a long narrow strip of green, consisting chiefly of rubbish-heaps, overgrown with herbage, rank but rich. Here clothes were sometimes hung to dry; here all the children of the neighbourhood had a much-beloved play-ground, where many an innocent gambol and many a noisy romp cheated hours of their wearisomeness, and gave healthful tone to lungs that might otherwise have been pining in close nurseries. Our nursemaids of course kept a careful surveillance over us; and some fond and anxious mothers themselves watched our motions from the opposite windows. We were there safe, and we were happy; I say *we*, but oftener I was doomed, from my own infirmities, to cast longing looks to the cheerful groups from my station at my mother's casement; and just as often I occupied my listless time in gazing with wonder and curiosity at the stately but sombre mansion over the way.

It was very extensive, and had numerous windows. The door and the lower windows, which were close upon the street, were surrounded by a sort of honey-comb carving in Portland stone—the only piece of decoration attempted on the building, if I except one fierce-looking bearded countenance, just above the portal. To my childish fancy, the former was decidedly ornamental, while the latter was a piece of unmitigated ugliness and monstrosity. The Venetian blinds of all

the windows were constantly closed. Well may such things be called *jalousies*. To the inmates of a room, indeed, they are very serviceable; one can easily peep outwards, and may thus pleasantly regulate the degree of shade required by the fastidious. But to inquisitive outsiders they are most envious-looking appurtenances. In the days I speak of, how I did hate the dismal green guardians of the sacredness of those chambers: by no chance did it ever happen that, often and long as I looked towards them, I saw one living thing within. Neither, from week to week, was the door ever seen to open, or guest to arrive, or morning visitor to call; and yet the lady who dwelt there in her loneliness, had connections and acquaintance among the great and grand ones of the city and county. How, then, did she maintain any place in society at all? Truly her hold of it was frigid and nerveless at best: it seemed only in a fitful, dreamy sort of style she ever mingled with the world; but her friends—that is, those of them who respected as much as they pitied her—knowing her preference for seclusion, paid their slight attentions by sending their servants, who were admitted by a back-entrance from another street. This I only knew long afterwards, so that for years there appeared to me a dark mysterious shade between the inmates of that cheerless abode and the loving, warm, breathing world around me.

There was one exception, without which a weight as of a nightmare would have oppressed my spirit in connection with that dwelling. On each Sabbath, as the cheerful bells of the city spires began to peal for worship, the opposite door opened, and a sedan-chair, closely curtained, was carried out, and borne to the parish church, where our family also attended. Then, indeed, we saw Mrs Hill—a stately and still handsome dame, richly attired—step from her chair within the church portals, and daintily, yet with noiseless solemn gait, and downcast eyes, pass into her solitary pew. During the devotional parts of the service, a large fan was spread before her face; and it was remarked, that even our minister's richest bursts of eloquence—and he was one of the most gifted and admired preachers of the day—could hardly win the serious lady to lift her eyes to his countenance; yet when she did for a moment, those large hazel eyes—clear, penetrating, and intelligent—had wonderful sweetness in them too. I used to think in my childish reveries, I could have loved those eyes very dearly, if permitted to gaze freely into their depths. She always remained in her seat till the other worshippers had departed, when she again stepped to her chair, to be carried home. Pelting rain or summer sky, deep snow or autumn gale, twice each Sabbath did the solitary lady attend public worship thus. On every other occasional service, she was also there. She was said to be scrupulously devout in her private religious observances; and we had rather an affecting instance of this, which, indeed, brought us into somewhat closer contact with our singular neighbour. On one of the days of public humiliation, or national fasts, as they were called, appointed by the legislature yearly during the war, Mrs Hill, as was her custom, literally *fasted* till the evening. Coming out of church in the afternoon, my good father happened to be late, and observed Mrs Hill come very slowly and tottering down the area, when she stretched out her hand to lean on a pew-door in the way. My father stepped back, and offered her his assistance, which was at once accepted; and as he placed her in her chair, he saw from the ashy hue of her chiseled features that she was utterly exhausted, no doubt from protracted want of nourishment; he therefore procured a little wine from the adjoining

vestry-room, and the lady having swallowed some, revived, and thanked my father with a look of gratitude and courteous obeisance that spoke far more eloquently than words could have done. He bowed in return, and she was moved off.

Only a week after this little occurrence, my young brothers and I took measles. How came Mrs Hill to know of this circumstance? It would seem she had some quiet channel of communication with outward things; for her butler came over to our house with his mistress's compliments, and a basket of the rarest and most delicious fruit for the sick children; and who does not know what grateful refreshment to the fevered palate this would prove? Indeed, I well recollect, that as often as I partook of Mrs Hill's gift, I used to think how kindly her heart must be, and I wished she had a number of little clinging arms around her, as my own dear grandfather had. Ah! thereby hangs a tale.

Health had revisited our dwelling; a mild green January seemed scarcely to impress us with the noxious of midwinter, except for the long dark nights and short dull days, when not a wandering sunbeam could pierce the murky clouds that shrouded the busy city.

One night shortly after eleven, when my father was just retiring, a loud sharp ring from the street door-bell was heard, pealing through the lower regions, echoing in the stillness to which the regular household was then consigned, like some death-foretelling knell. Only once anything like it had ever been heard in our house at that hour, and it was when a fire had occurred at my uncle's, and my father was summoned to his aid. I slept in my mother's dressing-closet, and from my own couch I sprang to hers, where I nestled, trembling, till my father's return. Mrs Hill had requested his presence over the way, a summons he instantly obeyed. He was ushered by the butler into the drawing-room, where the lady was seated beside a small writing-table. The room was handsomely lighted up, and a cheerful fire blazed in the ample old-fashioned grate. Mrs Hill rose and apologised for the liberty she had taken, and explained that she required some person to witness her signature to a codicil to her will. Her words were as few as possible, consistently with courtesy; and my father, while he merely bowed low in polite acquiescence, shivered involuntarily at the strange scene: the solemn, quiet, and self-possessed bearing of the lady—the late and dreary hour—and the melancholy loneliness of the aged woman, thus preparing at midnight, as it were, for her last rest. Oh, had she no child or kindred to stand by her then? Was she to meet those trying arrangements alone, and the necessary presence of a witness, to be found only by summoning an entire stranger to her presence? Her nerve, however, seemed quite equal to the task. Calmly and firmly she wrote her name, and then my father and her faithful Johnston, the butler, affixed theirs. My father was offered wine, a decanter of which with biscuit stood ready, but he declined, and with another reverential obeisance he took leave, having hardly uttered a word.

Twice again, at the same hour, within the following month, the same thing occurred. On the last occasion, the lady apologised still more earnestly for the trouble she had given, and inquired for my mother's health, and that of my grandfather, with whom she had had a slight acquaintance many years before.

The cheerful health-breathing spring soon followed these events, but I was still too delicate to encounter abroad the bracing wind of March. Tired of books and dolls, I had one day betaken myself to my station at our parlour window, and involuntarily began to wonder whether Mrs Hill intended soon to die or not; that event being, as I remembered, indissolubly associated in my mind with the ceremony of making a will. Pity that such is the case too often with children of larger growth! In the midst of my meditations, I started to see the mysterious massive opposite door

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thrown open: Mrs Hill issued forth on foot, and stepped right across, and up the steps to our house. My mother was writing; and as I knew she liked not in that case to be spoken to, I said nothing, though my heart beat violently with pleasure and surprise; for my curiosity had become almost intense about our opposite neighbour, all the more so because I chose, from some perversity, to keep my thoughts habitually to myself. Dear mamma was almost as much surprised as I was when Mrs Hill was shewn in to her presence, and I was still more astonished at the sang-froid with which she conquered all appearance of the kind, and received her unwonted visitor. Loveliest and dearest of mothers! Gentle and ladylike ever was thy demeanour; but towards the friends thou lovedst, there was a frank and affectionate cordiality in thy manner I sadly missed while Mrs Hill was present; but I now feel assured she would not have appreciated the winning frankness I liked so well; and that, on the contrary, the repose of good-breeding, and somewhat formal politeness assumed for the occasion, were far more completely to the visitor's taste. Indeed, after this interview, my mother was said to be a decided favourite with the venerable gentlewoman. Mrs Hill was completely the lady, but a passionless and stately one. You would have imagined that she had so fenced herself round with the etiquette and conventionalities of an artificial state of society, that she had become inextricably secluded, by their overgrowth, from the genial sunshine and heaven-born air, so that she had at length faded and frozen to the mere counterpart of a well-carved monument. I do even now believe such to have been the case, and that her home-affections were entombed in that sad and desolate shrine.

Mrs Hill's visit was one, I suppose, purely of graceful courtesy—a respectful acknowledgment of my father's prompt attention to her midnight whims, though she never even alluded to that circumstance. I kept close behind the shelter of the window-curtain, expecting, however, every moment, as eagerly I longed, to be summoned forth from my retreat, that I might be presented in due form to the stranger; but nothing of the kind occurred, so that I had to content myself with scanning her countenance, her dress, her manners, and with attending to the slight conversation, which she carried on in a very low and singularly sweet tone.

Mrs Hill's age could hardly be guessed at from her appearance. I had heard she must be older than my grandfather, and he was quite a patriarch; but she was far more upright, and far less wrinkled than he, and instead of his venerable silver hairs, she wore full frizzled auburn locks, that were evidently borrowed. Her countenance was not intellectual, indeed there was little expression there; but its perfect repose had in it a certain nameless charm; it made the beholder involuntarily speculate whether any human passion had ever stirred the solemn bosom's calm, that seemed indicated by those still and faultlessly regular features. Her costume would have been more befitting a much younger person. We have a notion, and the past generation had it too, that for elderly ladies, especially if they are widows, a sombre, or at least grave style of dress is most becoming. Mrs Hill's robe was of rich silver-gray silk, with long-pointed waist, and full open skirt, beneath which was a quilted petticoat of the same material. Her bonnet was of satin of a similar colour, with close Quaker front and high crown; and she wore a small black cloak, or *negligée*, trimmed with rich foreign lace. Moreover, she had very high-heeled shoes, which caused a peculiar mincing dainty gait such as I have observed in French ladies.

Mrs Hill had most beautiful hands—youthful in their roundness and whiteness, and they were adorned with rich and valuable rings. She wore no gloves—it was the only piece of display or affectation we could detect

in her; but the arm and hand, which she always kept folded across each other, were partially covered with lace mittens, above which fell the deep point-ruffles that finished the half-short sleeve of her dress. The impression on my memory is, that that antique dress, besides being well adapted to her style and manner, was much more becoming than the then most ugly mode; and, it would appear, the *élégantes* of our day have made a precisely similar discovery.

Mrs Hill's morning-call was of fashionable brevity, and as she took leave, methought she cast a glance expressive of annoyance towards the crimson drapery, as it was slightly stirred by my movements; and then she was gone. My mother in due time returned the visit of our opposite neighbour, and I, though always accustomed to go with dear mamma on similar expeditions, was, to my great mortification, left at home; but I was told in explanation, that Mrs Hill disliked children—never voluntarily noticed them, and carefully eschewed their society. My little heart was nearly bursting with disappointment, and eke with indignation at such an unheard-of taste. Dislike children, indeed! No wonder she was so lonely, so desolate, so forlorn. She deserved it all! Perhaps she did; but was she not the more to be pitied? I did not think of that then.

Mrs Hill seemed disposed to cultivate the slight acquaintance thus commenced. I cannot exactly fathom why, unless it were Providence leading to a desirable end. My father and mother were asked to meet a few friends at dinner in her house: mamma happened to be poorly; papa duly accepted the invitation. The small party, for whom an elegant and *recherché* entertainment was provided, was as stiff and stately as possible; but none of the guests were like Mrs Hill. They were modernised, common-place, well-bred people, who considered it a part of that same good-breeding to conform to the mood and manner of their hostess; but while her demeanour was reserved, it was refined and natural, and therefore becoming; theirs was constrained, and in so far ungraceful. Some remark was afterwards made on the circumstance of Mrs Hill presenting her hand to my father to lead her to the dining-room, he being the youngest—I think he must have been the handsomest—man in the company; but then, he was the greatest stranger: still more, when she requested him to take the bottom of her table—a post usually given, I believe, to the oldest or most familiar friend. But papa thought he understood the *wherefore* of this little mark of attention; for suddenly his thoughts darted to his former solemn nocturnal interviews with his interesting hostess. He was reckoned a graceful and attentive landlord at his own table, and on this wonderful occasion it may be supposed he did his best, for which he received Mrs Hill's even cordial thanks, when, after the other guests had departed, he too took his leave.

It became a matter of mere common politeness that Mrs Hill should be invited to our house in return. She had begun the friendly intercourse, and we must be supposed desirous to follow it out. The occasion of a week's visit from my grandfather was chosen, and an unpretentious invitation sent to Mrs Hill. The answer was, she was too unwell to go out anywhere. Upon this, my grandfather, presuming on early acquaintance and his sacred profession, concluded to call on her; whereupon I boldly demanded to accompany him. He, fondly indulgent as he ever was, would not be persuaded that his quiet little Mary might not with perfect propriety be his companion. Well did I, naughty child, know beforehand, that no remonstrance on the part of my father, no fastidious delicacy my mother might plead, would avail aught against my slightest desire, far less the tears I thought proper to call to my aid on this occasion. So I tripped over the way triumphantly—at last found myself passing that frowning guardian

above the portal, and finally entered Mrs Hill's drawing-room.

It was large, lofty, cold, and dark. The sun never cheered its gloom, while all day long his bright beams streamed into our own dark, cozy, cheerful sitting-room opposite. I gazed on everything I saw with eager curiosity, oddly mingled with awe, as I remembered how long I had vainly wished to peer within the dismal blinds. My grandfather hated darkness and gloom at all times; with a bold hand he let daylight in at once; and as the unwonted radiance kissed furniture and appointments, my very heart leaped for joy, as if it were the harbinger of better, brighter things to poor Mrs Hill. The chairs were small seated, high backed, and in great numbers, ranged primly round the room. There were large quaintly-carved sofas, and small graceful-looking tables, and a glass-case with richly-bound books. The hangings were of heavy valuable silk. A few small ebony-framed specimens of female handiwork in cut paper were suspended here and there; and last, but not least, there was a pleasant-looking portrait of a gentleman in a court-dress and well-powdered wig. Everything looked untouched and unapproachable, frigid and repulsive as the poor lady who owned and dwelt amidst all this chilly grandeur.

We had some little time to wait, my dear grandfather and I, and we made a few whispered remarks on what we saw, till just as he began to grow impatient, and resolved to pull the bell, a respectable-looking female, Mrs Hill's personal attendant, appeared, and asked my grandfather to go to her lady's room. We had not suspected her indisposition was at all so serious. I followed, notwithstanding a doubtful gesture from the abigail, and even a kindly-worded wish that I should remain behind. It was not to be thought of; and softly as a mouse I stole after my venerable relative.

Mrs Hill was propped up in bed, her countenance changed and sunken, or was it only the different guise in which I now beheld it? As pale she looked as the snowy coverings of her high and spacious bed, whose ample dark draperies, by contrast, made the rest so deathly pure and white. No glance or word was addressed to me, so I stood apart, still and silent, while my grandfather said a few words of kindness and cheering. The invalid expressed in a feeble voice, but with perfect calmness, her expectation of approaching death, and the resignation with which she was prepared to meet it. My grandfather asked who her medical attendant, to which she rather testily replied, she had no confidence in doctors or drugs, and would have none of them.

It was not necessary, or indeed proper, to argue this point, and so the reverend visitor contented himself with a few pious remarks, which were respectfully attended to, and then he was asked to pray. This request of course was complied with, when a devout amen was responded to each sentence from the sick-bed. My own ideas were quite bewildered, as I mechanically knelt down close to the beloved speaker. I felt as if in the holy presence of the Angel of Death himself, and yet as if, somehow, I should be able to ward off part of his terrors from the venerable lady at whom they were aimed.

When prayer was finished, and we arose from our knees, I stood by my grandfather, his arm encircling me, my hand resting on his shoulder, and his dear silver curls twined round my fingers—a favourite posture of mine. The attendant brought wine, and gave me a large slice of rich cake, and it happened, as I took it, I looked towards the faded lady in the bed. I found she, too, had at length fixed her eyes on me, and then I saw them fill with tears. My grandfather had also observed it, without seeming to do so.

‘One of your grandchildren, Dr J—?’ then asked the low sad voice.

‘Yes, madam—my little Mary,’ replied he, at the

same moment lifting me upon the steps by the couch. The lady murmured: ‘Mary—’tis my name too.’ She stretched out her hand, I felt the soft trembling touch on my forehead, and that was all. Perhaps I then received the last blessing of the aged gentlewoman, who had been, for a considerable period of my short life, an object of more than ordinary interest to me.

An apology may be thought necessary for having mingled so much egotism with my short sketch; but as I was made, as one might say, a cat's-paw in the event that followed, I could hardly avoid it; neither would the sketch otherwise have had the *waisseblance* for the reader.

On returning home, I for the first time heard Mrs Hill's history, and also the proposal of a little plan by my excellent grandfather, whose warm heart was ever revolving means by which he might confer benefits or increase the happiness of his fellow-creatures.

Mrs Hill had been educated in all the stiff precision of the manners of the last century. She was one of a large family of daughters, there being one son to inherit a dilapidated but ancient estate. The daughters were taught little that could tend to expand their minds or cultivate the amiable and benevolent affections. High seats without backs at the embroidery-frame—formal courtesies—elaborately precise deportment—and Scripture-reading, in a comfortless school-room: such was the round of educational practice in those days. Among many objectionable points, filial reverence and silent unswerving obedience were sternly enforced. What wonder if many a fair girl sunk into an early grave from spinal disease, and many more were glad to accept of the first tolerably eligible offer of marriage permitted to be proposed to them. On one point, however, the family circle of Mrs Hill's parents had advantages not to be overlooked in these days of cleverness, piquancy, and greater freedom of manners. Meeting in their father's house only the best and purest society, they insensibly learned to be refined, graceful, and scrupulously delicate, without the affectation of either. Such were, I have often been told, the English ladies of the old school; and it may be a puzzling problem whether, in modern times, we have on the whole gained anything in true purity and elevation of sentiment, by rejecting the manners of our great-grandmothers, and adopting instead, those of our more fascinating and volatile continental neighbours. It is, however, a fact, that the high breeding and refined taste of the middle classes of the last century are only to be found in the highest circles of our own times; where, we think, it is demonstrable, that ease is not incompatible with gracefulness, or affability with a refined sense of decorum. But to return to the subject of our sketch.—She had no opportunity of forming a rational, early, well-tried attachment; but at a discreet age, her parents selected for her a worthy gentleman of good fortune, to whom she was united, after a short and formal courtship. They had only one child, and this one tender loving tie became the absorbing misery of their after-life; not, as I verily believe, from the conscious fault of either, so much as from the rapidly-changing opinions of society to which I have before alluded.

Mrs Hill early began to instil into her little girl those rigid lessons of obedience she had herself acquired so thoroughly; but whether it was that her daughter was not composed of such pliant materials, or the change that came over the spirit of her dream was borrowed from the new mode of contemporaneous society, rather than copied from that of her ancestors—so it was—Marion Hill grew self-willed—wild as a mountain-kid—frank, and guileless, and open-hearted as the winds of heaven in their all-caressing and fragrant beneficence. Her fond and good-natured father, who had seen more of the world than his wife, and was much less rigid in his ideas, took his darling's part, and thus began discord—altogether unseemly, and disturbing in its influence

on children—between the man and wife. The latter, however, had the stronger will, and sternly, yet when it might be, silently, took her own way; and when her husband died, ere Marion was ten years old, the mother resumed with a steadier, firmer hand than ever the discipline she considered right. Need we repeat an oft-told tale? Love came to the young girl's heart—love ardent, pure, and constant, for a cousin a year or two older than herself. He had been first the object of her childish admiration and confidence, and then of her undying womanly regard. Her mother could have no objection to such a match on the score of connection or personal qualities; but simply because her daughter had presumed to dispose of her heart without first asking her parent's leave, she forbade the union, so earnestly desired by the really deserving young couple.

The reader will anticipate the sequel: they married against her will, without her consent, and from that hour were driven from her heart—became to her as if they had never been. The youthful bride had an undoubted right, in equity, to a handsome fortune, but it was, by contract, placed at her mother's disposal; and so the husband entered into business. They struggled for awhile, and at length obtained a simple competence, though not the elegant luxury they might otherwise have enjoyed. Experiencing perfect happiness with her husband, Mrs Hill's daughter still yearned towards the lonely mother, and made many attempts at reconciliation, by letter and by the mediation of friends: everything of the kind was sternly repulsed. Hence the seclusion, the desolation of Mrs Hill's spacious mansion and contracted bosom; and all this while living in the same city with an affectionate daughter, a respectable son-in-law, and a lovely young family, who might have been playing with their grandmother's white hairs as lovingly as she had noticed me do on that memorable day.

My grandfather's acuteness built a little scheme on that one fearful glance he had detected: it was the only plot he ever laid in his life, and he always was inexpressibly thankful it was a successful one.

Next day, he again called on Mrs Hill, as she had indeed requested. He was accompanied this time not by me, but by another, in age and size about the same, and moreover, dressed in my white tippet and bonnet, with its plain broad blue ribbon. Her name was Mary too.

After a still shorter conversation than on the previous day, for Mrs Hill seemed weaker and nearer her end, she looked to the child, who was gazing wistfully in her face. The lady started, for even her dimmed eye could see dark clustering ringlets and a lovely cherub cheek glowing with the roses of health, instead of the pale wan face of the day before.

'Is that your grandchild again?' faltered the invalid.

'Nay, my dear madam,' promptly replied my grandfather; 'but 'tis another Mary—your own flesh and blood, my friend. Let me have the happiness to put your grandchild into your arms.' And little Mary was soon folded there, and nestled on the bosom so long cold and dead to the holiest sympathies of our nature. Of course this but paved the way for the mother of the sweet child, who sedulously and tenderly ministered round her parent's dying bed for a few days more, during which, I was told, will and codicils—those three cruel codicils witnessed by my dear papa—were all destroyed, and the children obtained their natural inheritance.

Soon after this, I saw the long funeral train pass from the well-known door. She was deeply and sincerely mourned by her family, and by others, who then forgot her faults, or attributed them to defective and mistaken education. And, moreover, in that once gloomy house I spent afterwards many a happy day: many a merry dance had I in the spacious drawing-room, now gay and bright, with romping boys and

laughing girls. And that very little Mary who was smuggled to her own grandmother's breast in my name and disguise, is still one of my dearest and most cherished friends.

THE SCIENTIFIC GATHERING AT HULL.

THE British Association have just held their twenty-third annual meeting on the banks of the Humber, and so added another twelvemonth to their history, with, it is to be hoped, increased ability of living for the future. It is something for such a body to have existed for twenty-three years—to have survived the critical period of infancy, and the periodical sarcasm to which they were treated by the *Times*; and now they take place among the 'great facts' of the age. It is true that occasionally they lay themselves open to a little rebuke, for many of the 'facts' read before their Sections had better have been left in the inkstand, or to the archives of local Mechanics' Institutes. The mere accumulation of facts, regardless of their scientific value, seems to be one of the errors of the day; it is one, however, which further enlightenment will mitigate if not remove; and as thought ripens, we shall see arise among us those philosophical minds able to estimate facts at their true value, and make clear their significance.

At this meeting, there was a little departure from the usual routine by the holding of a preliminary public meeting, at which Professor John Phillips made a capital speech—a fact which will surprise no one who knows that distinguished geologist. If intended to rouse a little enthusiasm by way of giving élan to the start, and spirit to the subsequent proceedings, it was cleverly suited to its object, sketching out the programme with promise of good results, and the information that, during the period of their existence, the Association have spent £40,000 in the promotion of science. Here is something like proof of having been in earnest.

In due time, the regular business began. Colonel Sabine, the retiring president, introduced his successor to the assembled savans in a few words as well phrased as they are well deserved by the gentleman in question—Mr Hopkins, of Cambridge, a name among the foremost of British philosophers. Then, on taking the chair, the new president, following the example of his predecessors, delivered an address. These annual addresses have come to have a certain value, as they present a *résumé* of the scientific results obtained during the past year, and shadow forth expectations of the future. Most of the subjects mentioned by Mr Hopkins have already been brought under the notice of our readers; we may, however, give a brief outline, as he points out their value and scientific relations. Astronomy was first touched upon, probably because it is the most exact of our sciences, and because it is opening into newer and wider conceptions of the laws of the universe. The discovery of twenty-two small planets in addition to Ceres, Juno, Vesta, and Pallas, the four we learned about in our school-boy days, has helped to strengthen a suspicion for some time entertained by astronomers, that the number of these minor planets is perhaps incalculable. It is equally becoming a conviction, that all our stars have a planetary character; for it is found, on looking at certain parts of the heavens which were accurately mapped a few years ago, that the several objects are no longer in the relative places assigned to them on the maps. What a field is opened here for speculation! What mean those numbers of tiny orbs revolving, like ourselves, round the great centre? Then as to comets—we are getting to understand them better, and to have glimpses of their function in the mighty system; and Lord Rosse is still spying out nebule, finding new ones whenever the atmosphere is favourable—and, what is remarkable, all presenting

more or less of the same form. The more the nebule are observed, the more is their structure, so to speak, seen to be that of a spiral; and here, at once, is a question opened as to the cause, which we may safely leave to the astronomers of Europe. Speculation is the telescope of the mind, and they may worthily employ it in conjunction with their other instruments.

The chief points noticed under the head of magnetism were, that the moon as well as the sun exerts an influence on suspended magnets. Certain movements take place in a solar day which are due to the action of the sun, and a similar but weaker set of movements occurs also during a lunar day. Here, then, we have to discover in what way these two distant bodies combine with the earth to produce the phenomena of terrestrial magnetism. This subject connects itself with the whole circle of physical science, and importantly with the theory of heat. And with respect to heat, Mr Hopkins reviewed Professor W. Thomson's argument, that there is a continual loss of heat by radiation from the sun and planets, and that, unless it be renewed from some extraneous source, the time will come when the whole will be exhausted. He stated his own convictions to be quite in accordance with those of Professor Thomson; and added: 'If we are to found our theories upon our knowledge, and not upon our ignorance of physical causes and phenomena, I can only recognise in the existing state of things a passing phase of the material universe. It may be calculated in all, and is demonstrably so in some respects, to endure under the action of known causes for an inconceivable period of time; but it has not, I think, received the impress of eternal duration in characters which man is able to decipher.' There is another part of the theory of heat which is of great importance to us in an industrial point of view—namely, the proofs recently obtained by Messrs Joule and Thomson, that the amount of heat which passes from an engine or other body is not the same as that which passed into it, but that a portion has been converted into mechanical effect, and that the quantity of the one is always equivalent to that of the other. These conclusions have a high economical value, and will ere long be turned to account by the makers of steam-engines. It is but a few years since the subject was first opened, and little was thought of it until the late experiments, which have fully demonstrated its importance.

Geology would of course come in for its due share of notice, seeing that Mr Hopkins has made it his especial study. He instanced certain defective points; and shewed that we ought to know more of the chemistry of geology, as to how coal is formed, how mineral veins are segregated, how crystallisation and lamination are produced. If our knowledge of these processes were such as it ought to be, we should not have our geologists so much at a loss to agree on the question: What is coal? to say nothing of other stratifications. We want also to know more of the dynamics of geology; of the phenomena of elevation and depression of the earth's surface, so as to discover, if possible, the law on which these great movements have taken place. Elie de Beaumont has put forth a theory of the systematic arrangement and parallelism of mountain-chains, but for its proof or disproof there must be a greater amount of enlightened observation. There is another part of the same subject on which much speculation has been expended—namely, the thickness of the earth's crust, and the condition of the interior. Mr Hopkins believes those to be mistaken who hold that we have beneath our feet a shell of only about fifty miles thick, and molten matter below, because, as the pressure increases with the depth, so would the fusibility diminish. In conjunction with Messrs Fairbairn and Joule, he is testing these views by experiment, and already with confirmatory results. White wax, for instance, when subjected to a pressure of 13,000 pounds to the square

inch, required to melt it an increase of not less than 30 degrees of Fahrenheit over the temperature at which it usually melts. If this be true of wax, it must be also true of less fusible substances; and hence, instead of a crust of fifty miles' thickness, we may assume one of some hundreds of miles, or perhaps solidity to the very core.

At one of the sectional meetings, Professor J. Phillips exhibited a photographic portrait of the moon, which, considering that our satellite will not stand motionless while her portrait is being taken, gave a very interesting representation of her features. This is one of the first steps towards a report on the geology and physical condition of the moon as compared with the earth, which a few gentlemen have been appointed to draw up. One advantage of photographs is, that they will bear magnifying; hence we may hope to determine if there is any difference of level between the inside and the outside of the moon's ring-shaped mountains; to investigate the causes of her bright stripes, and the nature of the large patches to which the name of seas has been given—indeed, to become acquainted with all the phenomena of her surface. The more instantaneous the photographic process can be made, the better will be the results. The views are to be taken just after sunrise and before sunset, and at the meridian, whereby three aspects of sunshine will be obtained, and shadows in two directions. When all are complete, Professor Phillips says we shall see the moon as she would appear at a distance of twenty-four miles; and that 'we shall then be able to see and measure on the glass or metal her mountains and valleys, her coasts and cliffs, her glens and precipices, her morasses and sand-banks, her craters of eruption and lava streams, with a degree of minuteness which could hardly be supposed.'

Railways were a fertile subject of discussion, and sundry projects were brought forward for the prevention of accidents—one, that huge fans should be affixed to the carriages of a train, and heavy magnets to some of the wheels, so as to make it possible to stop suddenly; but none are equal to the often suggested contrivance of a passage from one carriage to the other along the whole length of a train, making intercommunication easy. The fact that axles begin to deteriorate from the first moment of their use, and that their breaking is only a question of time, shews that invention may advantageously devote itself to the task of finding out some way of making axles that will not alter. Mr Fairbairn has been experimenting on locomotive boilers, to determine the amount of strain they can safely bear, and to discover their weakest places; he finds that when stays are fitted to the boilers in areas of 16 square inches, instead of 25 inches, as at present, they will resist a pressure of 1600 pounds to the square inch. He has satisfactorily proved also, that the pressure of steam can be raised from 30 pounds to 50 pounds on the square inch in eleven minutes—a fact which will go far to explain some of those explosions which occasionally take place, and nobody can account for. According to Mr Neison, accidents happen more from carelessness on the part of the passengers themselves, than from any other cause: there has not been a death from the breaking of an axle since 1844, nor from the breaking of other parts of the machinery since 1847. It appears to be certain, that the number of accidents may be diminished by simply giving fair play to the faculties which make up vigilance and common sense. Even as it is, Mr Neison's inquiry shews that an individual put into a train at the moment of his birth, and never leaving it, would have to travel 960 years continuously before it came to his turn to meet with a fatal accident.

Mr Rennie gave some particulars of an engine combining the use of steam and ether, with which he has crossed the Mediterranean twice, and with a saving of one-half in the amount of fuel usually consumed.

Engineers consider this as likely to lead to great improvements in the economy of sea-going vessels. Mr Thomson, of Belfast, exhibited a newly-invented jet-pump, singularly well adapted for the raising of water from a low level to a higher one, and for the drainage of lands that lie below their outfall. It is an instrument which may be cheaply employed where other machinery would be too expensive. These are but a few among the numerous contrivances that were brought forward having some scientific, agricultural, manufacturing, or sanitary purpose.

Deep-sea soundings were talked about, chiefly with a view to prove that we are to accept the results with caution, as they are liable to great error from the action of underlying strata of the water. It will be important to remember this in the great oceanic survey, which is to include depth as well as other characteristics. So much has been said of late about the improvement of navigation, that it could not fail of notice; and we find, among other matters, that a paper was read, illustrated by maps, shewing the shortest routes to the Pacific by great-circle lines. It appears that, following one of these lines, the distance from the Land's End to Sydney, by way of Panama, is not more than 12,049 miles; and by the Cape of Good Hope to Hobart-town, 11,200 miles. The voyage is thus shorter by some thousands of miles than commonly believed; and one of our best Cunarders would steam it in from thirty to thirty-five days. Another interesting fact brought out by this paper was, that the British portions of North-western America are more favourably situated for the great Pacific trade than any other part of the coast.

Each of the seven sections into which the Association divide themselves at their meetings was fully occupied, for not fewer than 172 papers were sent in and read. It would be manifestly impossible to notice all these in the space of a couple of pages; some are unimportant, and the best will be further heard of, as all find a fitting place in the pages of the Report published by the Association. Some of them have really advanced science; such as those relating to the effects of light on plants—the chemical effect of solar rays—the relations of chemistry to geology—the decomposition of water—the oscillatory theory of light, in which Messrs Rankine, Stokes, and Stevelly took part; besides various questions in mechanics and illustrations of geography and ethnology. The old subject of gold in Ireland was revived, and explanations given of the localities in which the precious metal is to be found; but leading, fortunately, to no hopes of competing with Australia or California. The fact supports a view that chemists are beginning to entertain—that sea-water is the source of gold, which at once accounts for the universal distribution of the yellow deposit.

The meeting did not break up without putting certain matters in train for further advancement: the investigations into flax are to be continued, as also how to cool the air in hot climates—earthquake waves—the effect of temperature on wrought-iron plates—periodical phenomena—the vitality of seeds—the dredging for new marine animals on the north and east of Ireland—and the inquiry into the best means of supplying water to towns. The sum of £370 was voted for the prosecution of these various researches during the next twelve months.

In a pecuniary point of view the meeting was a good one, for the amount of money received exceeded £900; moreover, 881 members and associates were present; and it argues favourably for the gentler sex, that 236 ladies enrolled themselves as members. If this be an indication of a rational change about to come over the female mind, there will be an end to the despotic sway of Parisian milliners. Philosophers and savans though they be, the assemblage shewed that they could attend to other things as well as their heptarchy of sections:

they held sundry conversaciones, aided by the hospitalities of the people of Hull, and there they talked about abstruse science as mere tea-table gossip. They went excursions, too, to Thornton Abbey, to Lord Lonsborough's park, to Flamborough Head, to Grimsby Docks, to the agricultural implement factory at Beverley, where they were to pronounce on the merits of the Banbury digging-machine. And lastly, the Earl of Harrowby was appointed chairman, and Liverpool the place of meeting for 1854.

AN ANGLER'S REMINISCENCE OF HEIDELBERG.

It was the sudden proposition of one of a travelling party at Heidelberg, one hot morning in a recent July, that we should go and see the trout fed at a place in the neighbourhood, some two miles off, called Wolf's Brunnen, or the Wolf's Well—a name given to it in consequence of a traditional legend that the enchantress Jena, who lived on the spot, and first foretold the greatness of the house of the Palatinate, was there torn to pieces by a wolf.

Broiling hot as was the noon, and inclined as we all were rather to sit upon the antique bridge, watching the cool river, studded with pleasure-boats, glide swiftly through the arches, 'like happiness away,' or, seated idly beneath the chestnuts on the castle-terrace, to dream out luxuriously the brief holiday our business allowed us from the shores of England, there fell, like magic upon our ear, the sound of 'Trout!' It was enough that we were disciples of old Walton: in a moment we were roused to energy, as by a spell.

Floating across our minds came a dream of rambles by the rough mountain-side, and mornings whiled away beside the impatient cataract: visions of brown, dark, peat-dyed streamlets upon the shaggy heath, with their occasional pool, so gaily decked by a choice store of white and golden water-lilies: memories of quiet evening lakes, just ruffled, a few hours from nightfall, by that light but determined breeze the fisher loves: of the mournful plash of the successive waves on the lee-shore, where the clustered plants and buck-weed, twined amid the tufted rushes, almost choke the mouth of the softly-murmuring feeder-brook: of the lonely rock-girt mountain-tarn, of depth unfathomable, along the shores of which the raven found his sustenance, or, croaking dismally, soared high in air at our intrusion: of the old still pond at home, concealed amid the recesses of the ancient beechwood, with here and there a fir or silver-pine upon the bank, with the mysterious hollows round the tangled roots; of the twilight-hour in that lovely place, when the swallow had retired from her skimming repast; when the water-rats came forth from their retreat, and swam, or crept nibbling along the bank; when the bat went whirling by, and we viewed the stealthy flight of the goat-sucker, making her nightly circuit of the fields; or listened to the solitary owl, too-whooping up the dingle, with a sound that made our blood run cold, lest it might be the gipsy-poacher's signal.

Such crowding memories effectually roused us; and away the party scattered to get ready. The gentlemen are soon equipped and lounging by the door to watch, with unaccountable interest, the movements of people with whom we have no sympathy, no common tastes or habits; the students of the university (of whom there are about 700) strolling in knots along, generally with a ferocious bull-dog, wolf-hound, or some such sinister brute behind them; or a 'pie of boys,' packed in one of the slow-rolling droskies, with their variously coloured tasselled caps that look like bead-work, white, green, blue, red, and every hue,

according to their country, whether Austrian, Russian, German, French, Sicilian, with their eternal pipes and ivory-handled canes.

It is market-day; and the country women, with their white peaked caps and bright garb, standing amid the heaps of fruit—the antique, primitive, low wagons, laden with produce, or with the bundles of the laundress, drawn by teams of meek fawn-coloured milch-cows, that look very much like Alderneys—the sentries of the town-guard, pacing to and fro before their station in blue and red uniform, with spiked helmets of polished black leather—and occasionally a slim Cambridge student, one of a reading-party resident in Heidelberg, taking stock, like ourselves, of everything around; or returning, book in hand, from his tutor's lodgings, past heaps of dreamy-looking men, mustached and smoking—all concur in forming a curious picture to the eye of a stranger.

At length the ladies declare themselves in trim, armed cap-à-pied, and, despite our remonstrances, firmly tenacious of sketch-book and basket; and now the clumsy voiture, with its listless horses and its civil driver, arrayed, as all the public coachmen are at Heidelberg, in a livery of green coat and scarlet waist-coat, summoned by the obliging *Ober-kellner* (head-waiter), has rolled up to the door of the *Prinz-karl* from the adjoining square.

The party duly packed, ourselves having the honour of the box-seat, we start—not rapidly, we must in truth avow, but cautiously. The driver, however, is most insinuating—so good-tempered and obliging! How he repeats, over and over, now more slowly, now in a louder tone, as he hopes to make our dull senses apprehend, an interesting account of something, evidently a 'lion,' to which he points. We are driving beneath the trees along the banks of the wide, fair-flowing Neckar. On the opposite side there is a picturesque house, with a veranda, creeper-clothed, and something like a skittle-ground behind, with trellis-work sheds all overspread by vines, and a strip of green-sward beyond, reaching up the glen behind the house: it is the *Hirschgasse* Inn. That is the place where the students meet to decide their duels; Sunday morning they spend in the arrangements. So frequent are they, that it is not at all an uncommon thing for a student who has been at Heidelberg four or five years, to have been engaged as principal in some twenty-five or thirty of those encounters. They fight, having their bodies thickly padded, and with a defensive cap, besides a covering on the eyes, so that the only part exposed to the adversary's attack is the lower portion of the face. The first blood drawn decides the conflict. We were at first inclined to smile at the childishness of such engagements, from the reports we received of them from the aforesaid Cambridge students, who had been on more than one occasion witnesses of the proceeding. We were soon, however, undeceived by a German professor, whom we met upon the Rhine, in company with some friends of ours. 'No such child's play, I can tell you; I have seen a fellow pinned to the door before now,' he said; 'and when they come to what they call a life-and-death combat, they strip off the covering, and set to with broadswords.' Indeed, during our subsequent stay in Heidelberg, one young man was brought home with his head laid open by a cut. You seldom met in the street, or saw boosing in the numerous beer-shops, any individual, unless of a curiously pacific appearance, whose nose or cheek was in its normal condition; and a doctor, whom we had occasion to call in, a man of the most sober demeanour, and reputed to be of great skill, had his countenance covered with scars, as if the relics of an impetuous youthful temper.

For some distance we wound along beside the river, on a road for the most part overshadowed, but allowing here and there a glimpse of interesting scenery, till, suddenly mounting a hill, and passing through an

orchard, we found ourselves upon the sloping descent of what in England we should term a farm cart-road, with the vale of the Neckar behind, the wooded height that frowns on Heidelberg before, and below, the object of our search.

We drew up in the road, and all jumped out. There were already several other carriages there, and the parties had gone sauntering about, or were busy taking refreshment in a fine Swiss cottage, which serves as an inn. Some were seated beneath the trees in the front of the hotel, and here and there was a group of coachmen drinking away the time.

One of these last, a German, but familiar with English, marshalled us the way. Our path led to a meadow, where we found a dark sluggish-looking pool, overhung with alders and other trees, where an occasional bubble or slow-waving fin indicated that big fish were feeding. We went on till we came to a small stream of gentle current, beneath a sloping bank all clothed with copsewood. It was exactly an English mill-race. There were the long weeds waving with the water's flow, as we have watched them a thousand times; and the small fry shooting with quickened pace up the stream at our approach, with here and there one a few inches long suspended, as it were, in dreaming mood, immersed, perchance, in his afternoon siesta between the surface and the bottom—in which condition, as we have found by repeated experience, he will accept no bait; although he may be taken by a noose of wire slipped round him.

There was nothing extraordinary in all this; but our attention was now called to something like a small well between the mill-race and the sluggish pool, where, beneath some overhanging ferns, we were able to discern the dark shape of a huge fish resting like a log upon the bottom.

This is something worth our visit. Fancy having that fellow at one's fly! We dropped a pebble on his back—another and another. No, he will not move. We tried to touch him with our stick; but we could not nearly reach him. This broken branch will do. We stir the water—still no symptoms of departure or alarm. He must be sick, or is a sham. We tap his back, without producing even the shudder of a fin. We bend down again, and absolutely slap him, when at length he moves, but so lazily along! A few undulations, and he rests again as before beneath a fern-leaf, and is motionless. We leave him with contempt, but not before observing another as apathetic on the opposite side of the well.

Ascending some steps, we reached another sluggish tank on a higher elevation. A girl came up with a few dead dace in a landing-net; she threw one in—when splash—whirr—plunge!—the apathy of the inhabitants was at an end; and a trout, with the sudden swiftness of a pirate, appearing from the depths, disappeared with his booty, leaving the surface, after a ripple or two, as placid and dark as before. Another dace—a plunge—a struggle—and the dismembered spoil is borne triumphantly away by some half-dozen combatants. These fish, our guide informed us, were upon an average five pounds in weight.

Yet again another range of steps, and we reached another similar, but, it struck us, shallower preserve, wherein were manifest in every part, cruising leisurely along, or darkly prowling, the forms of some twenty fish, that made us fairly cry out with delight. As dace were pitched in, they darted, splashed, and whirled, like the others, their dark sides flashing light as they turned in the struggle; then separating, sulkily, and, it would seem, discontented, each retired to his station. We have seen at the Wiesbaden public gardens a shoal of carp heap themselves one upon the other, like packed pilchards, and press forward for the bits of bread we threw into the water from the bridge, with a curious sound resembling a hungry pig's expression of

satisfaction with his liquid breakfast. This was corporate politeness. There was none of the determined, earnest, sullen, marauder-like behaviour of the trout of the Wolf's Brunnen.

These trout, we learned, are taken in the Necker when young, and fed up: they never attain to so great a size in their native river, where exercise and gaiety keep down their fat. They are sold, we were informed, at the incredible price of a florin and a half—that is, about 2s. 6d.—per pound. The champion of the troop, in the large pool, unlike the others, was of a bright orange colour, and had large and unhandsome excrescences upon his back.

We certainly never saw fish like these, except the insipid gray lake-trout of Scotland, and one we once came across at Beeston, in Cheshire, which was of an enormous age, and, perhaps from some ocular illusion, looked of a brilliant blue tint as he rested at the bottom of his well.

Rewarding our guide with a few specimens of the country coinage, we returned to the carriage, and set out on our return. We walked a good part of the way, however, tired of the lethargic pace of the horses. Fruit-trees grew beside us, in the corn-fields we passed through; the apples we plucked, though acid, were refreshing, and the black cherries—how juicy, how delicious! No wonder they are packed and sent by steam-boat to supply the London market. Down they showered in heaps upon the road as we threw a stick among the boughs. Rounding a point, there is before us a glorious scene! Let us sit here a few moments on this stone-seat beneath the wild clematis. There winds the Necker far through the valley, which, expanding as it lengthens, bears it to join the nobler Rhine. In the distance is a small steamer, with a gay crowd on board, who have been to explore the renowned scenery. And there, with its snake-like length waving to and fro with the current, floats down a raft, formed of trees lashed together, that was felled upon the far-off, perchance snow-clad mountains where the waters rise. It has a raised platform for the captain, and a village of wooden sheds for its crew of 300 or 400 men; some of whom are seen hurrying with the long poles from point to point, now concentrating their force so as to direct the movements of the raft as they approach some dangerous eddy, or prepare to shoot the bridge; while others lounge or lie basking in the sun, or occupy themselves in repairing any band that may have slipped or given way; in hauling up the punts they tow along, the cords of which the rough water may have loosened; in shipping their huge sweeps, of no further use at present; or in the varied mysteries of culinary or domestic duty, as they glide gently down the flood.

This is the smooth water-life of the rafts of the Necker. But how wild, how obstreperous, how unmanageable they become as they approach the rapids! How they toss, and strain, and sway! It requires the whole skill and strength of the crew to influence their course as they plunge madly over, writhing and winding like a wounded serpent amid the seething waters.

And below is Heidelberg—picturesque, unique, most charming Heidelberg!—with the thinnest, bluest vapour curling here and there above its deep brown-tinted roofs—its rows of fresh acacias—its restless, party-coloured crowd—the thousand colours of its houses—orange, blue, green, pink, violet—with the dismantled castle rising above its melancholy woods, with its richly-varied styles of architecture, its niched statues, and its stately halls.

But we have no time to linger longer; although swarms in holiday costume are already gathering to hear the band play on the terrace, or scattering along the shady walks amid the castle grounds. We hurry down the path beneath the walls, and in three hours

more are squabbling, without interpreter or common tongue, for the due amount of groschen change with the mustached and imperturbable official at the railway.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LATE SIR CHARLES NAPIER.

THE nationally lamented Duke has been speedily followed to his rest by another gallant and renowned soldier. The conqueror of Scinde is dead, and we have just returned from witnessing the anomalous funeral bestowed on him. As he was not on full pay, a military interment, with its solemn pomp of mournful music and sullen musketry, was refused to the war-worn old soldier—a circumstance painful on some accounts, and flattering to the nation in another, since the reason assigned was, that England has so many worthy sons, that to give such a distinction to all is impossible, and an invidious exception to the rule could not be permitted. Still, some unusual honour was shewn to the great chief. The High Street of Portsmouth, in the military chapel of which he was buried, was lined with unarmed soldiers, chiefly Highlanders, whose beautiful costume, especially their sable and scarlet plumes, gave an imposing martial effect to the scene. The town corporation formed a procession preceding the hearse. The Queen sent her yacht's crew. The naval commanders, admirals, and captains, also followed him to the grave; and the Rifles—unarmed—escorted the mournful cortège. There was much deep and sincere regret felt for the departed hero—sad faces filled the windows and pavements; and the shops closed their shutters. Standing by the side of the street, we watched the solemn crowd steal by, and there was a deep sorrow in our heart the while. We had known Sir Charles in India, just when he had returned triumphant from his battles on the banks of the Indus, and to know him only slightly was to like him in no ordinary measure.

With the exception of a transient glimpse, the last time we saw him at Dahpore—the governor's residence in the Deccan—riding at full speed, followed by his aid-de-camp, up the mimosa-shaded avenue. It was noonday, and the sun was pouring down a flood of fiery rays, which most Europeans would not have dared encounter, but the eagle-like Napier was wont to ride as unconcernedly and as heedlessly beneath the tropical sun as he would have done under the cloudy skies of England. The contrast of that last time, when he had appeared so full of life and vigour amid blazing sunshine, and this present, when his inert and lifeless body was borne slowly and silently by, beneath the clear cold sky of our September, was indeed a painful one. All that we had known of him in those days returned vividly upon our memory.

A picture rose before our mind's eye of the last time we saw him review his Eastern army. We beheld again the mighty and desolate plains of the Deccan with their strange, flat-topped mountains in the distance, covered in one spot with about 7000 soldiers; all of whom had just come out of real warfare, and who had in it performed the very same evolutions with the same calmness and precision they then manifested. We saw again the eagle-eyed, animated general ride up, when all was over, to the carriage in which we had a seat, and converse in his eager manner with the governor whilst the mingled soldiers of England, Scotland, Ireland, and India, defied before him, and marched off playing their national airs, which floated with a strange peculiar sweetness upon the sunset air. And now all was silence.

Sir Charles was married to a lady of strong though gentle character, and he delighted in relating an adventure which once befell the pair, very characteristic of

both. He and Lady Napier were riding one evening, unattended, on the summit of the Mahableshwur Hills. The sun had just set, the pathway was narrow, bordered on one side by jungle, and on the other by a deep precipice. Turning suddenly to his wife, he desired her to ride on at full speed immediately to the nearest village, and send some people back to the spot where she left him, and not to ask him the reason why he sent her. She obeyed—hear it, ye inquisitive and disputatious wives!—in silence. It was no slight trial of her courage as well as of her obedience, for the way was lonely, and beset with many possible perils, but she rode rapidly and boldly forward, and gained a village at some distance in safety. The party whom she then despatched and accompanied met Sir Charles, however, about a mile from the place, following in his lady's track; and he then explained the reason of his strange and unquestioned command. He had seen, as they slowly walked their horses, four savage eyes gleam at him from the jungle, and believed that they belonged either to tigers or chetahs—the hunting-leopard. He was aware that if they both rode off, the creatures, following the instinct of their nature, would be sure to chase them. He feared lest, if Lady Napier knew the fearful kind of peril they were in, she would be startled and unfit to make any attempt at escape, or at least that she would not consent to his own judicious plan; so he tested her obedience—as we have seen, successfully. He remained himself, confronting, and probably controlling the wild beasts with his eagle eye; for after a short gaze and a muttered growl, they retreated into the jungle, and he was free to follow his wife.

Lady Napier herself related to me another rather amusing incident in connection with animals. As she and Sir Charles were coming down the Mahableshwur Hills, they chose to pitch their tent and remain for the night on a spot which was inhabited by a tribe of monkeys. These beasts were drawn by their intense curiosity close to the travellers, and Lady Napier sent for some nuts, put them into the pocket of her apron, and fed one, which was bolder and tamer than the rest, with them. When they withdrew into the tent, the apish guests likewise retreated.

On awaking next morning, Lady Napier was startled at finding that her purse, which was in the pocket of the apron, had been stolen in the night. An inquiry was instantly made, and a close search instituted in her room for it, but in vain; and she had come to the conclusion, that some of those skilful Indian robbers, who can steal the sheets from under one, unfelt and unseen, had carried off her property, for the loss was considerable. When walking by chance into the back enclosure of the tent, she found her friend the monkey seated in grave dignity with her apron on, imitating her yester-evening's action, and supplying the want of nuts with her gold and silver coins, which he scattered liberally around him. He was suffered to empty the purse, and then they tried to catch him, but, so far as we remember, did not succeed; he returned to his woods clad in a black satin apron! and doubtless played for the future the part of the monkey who has seen the world.

Both Sir Charles Napier and his wife were much beloved by the English residents in India. The general was alike feared and adored by the natives. He understood their character, and they were dazzled by his splendid soldierly qualities. We have often found, when speaking to them of the hero of Scinde, that there was some strange connection in their minds between him and the comet or nebulous light, which, as they asserted, predicted the fall of the Ameers. Nay, I have heard it asserted that the Scindians looked on our general as a sort of incarnation of Zatanoi, and that the fear inspired by his laconic proclamation—'Belooches! I am coming up with 10,000 men to drive

you all to the devil!'—greatly assisted the might of his arms.

We have heard an incident related which tends to prove the effect this Spartan-like abruptness and known resolution had on the Eastern enemy whilst Sir Charles was in Scinde. A fort was held by a formidable and desperate robber, and the general, who could ill spare the time required to reduce it, ordered a young officer of his army to go, totally unarmed, into the hold of the chieftain, and deliver the following message:—'Come out to me, or, by —, I will come and fetch you!' The summons was as instantly obeyed as if Eblis himself had pronounced it, and the fort was surrendered to the English.

The hero's death was slow and painful. He died in his own house and among his own family. The physician on whose skill he most relied, and for whom he entertained a personal regard, told us that, a few days before he expired, he ordered his favourite charger to be brought to the window of his sleeping-room, which was on the ground-floor. He looked earnestly upon his old companion, and said with a dash of his former spirit: 'Ah, you rogue! you tried to kick my brains out once, but'—in a more tender tone—'I wish I could kiss you!'

The poor steed thus apostrophised followed of course in the funeral procession—the saddest object of it all—except perhaps the old generals, 'the brothers of his combats,' who looked as if they, like ourselves, could exclaim with Shakespeare:

Oh! withered is the garland of the war;
The soldier's pole is fallen; the odds is gone,
And there is nothing left remarkable
Beneath the visiting moon.

A VERY LOW NEIGHBOURHOOD.

We once lived in a very low neighbourhood. It is nobody's business why, or how the thing came about; the fact was so. We were there for some time, and from causes, too, of by no means a peculiar or romantic nature.

The first thing that arrested our notice, though it did not excite our surprise, on removing to the very low neighbourhood, was the dirt and squalor which prevailed as the rule, without a solitary exception. We marvelled at first how human beings, with senses like our own, could for years—there were old men and old women amongst them—exist in such a pestilential atmosphere; and still more did we marvel how any reasonable person could expect that human beings so situated, should preserve that equanimity of temper and moderation in language and behaviour, which are often as much owing to sanitary agencies as rosy cheeks and good digestion. When we heard cries of 'Murder!' hourly—when we saw blear-eyed ruffians dragged off to the police-office for maltreating women—when we saw mothers and children crowding together at the bar of the 'palace,' where old and young alike besought the fire-king to bestow upon them a balm for their miseries, it seemed so perfectly consistent with nature and reason that it should be so, that we should almost have regarded it as something anomalous and paradoxical had it been otherwise. Many a hot summer night, when walking home with a medical friend, we have passed the leviathan lodging-house or caravansary of our low neighbourhood, and inhaled the compound, concentrated essence of impurity with which the heated air was heavily laden, we have felt painful misgivings as to our own fortune and amiability, if placed in certain situations which our stimulated fancy pictured to itself.

Not having previously lived in a very low neighbourhood, we were quite unprepared for many things which we met there. We found, that whatever might be the

opinion of the inhabitants upon the abstract question of property, its duties and privileges, within their own circle vested rights were held inviolate; and a stranger in an Arab's tent could not have been more secure from pillage. We have often met on dark nights and in narrow alleys, poor shivering creatures, with bare arms and feet, their only covering a pair of ragged trousers and a waistcoat, but they never attempted to make their own condition more comfortable at our expense. In fact, they generally seemed to be too deeply buried in thought to take much notice of us. There was an old watchmaker, whom any one might see constantly at work with valuable watches and trinkets before him, on which some juvenile robber, if so disposed, might easily, by breaking a pane of glass, have laid illegal hands, and yet, for nearly fifty years, during which time that old watchmaker had lived in this very low neighbourhood, and openly followed his business, not more than two attempts had been made to rob him, and both proved unsuccessful. On one of these occasions—it happened during our residence there—the operating parties were strangers to the district, raw country lads; and the hue and cry being raised, they were speedily hunted down by an incensed populace, half of whom were boys, and who acted as special constables in this instance, the stolen property recovered, and the unlawful holders severely chastised for their ignorance of our manners and customs. They were not handed over to the police—we did not recognise that exponent of physical force in our neighbourhood—but the culprits were made amenable to Lynch law, and were literally *pounded* till they were black and blue.

Another trait of character, which made an agreeable impression on us during our sojourn in the low neighbourhood, was the benevolent feeling which gushed forth like a mountain-rill from the fermenting mass in which our political economists traced the dissolution of the social system. It frequently happened that the son, nephew, or grandson of some old inhabitant got into trouble, as it was called, to extricate him from which, or to furnish him with the means of extricating himself, a guinea for counsel's fee must be instantly provided. Although many who were called upon in these cases to subscribe their charitable mite were honest, hard-working people, they seldom or never hesitated to assist one whom they considered had been less fortunate than themselves. The mode in which this assistance was generally rendered, was by a raffle, the prizes in which were sometimes very curious. We have seen a baby's cradle, three flat irons, half-a-dozen live pigeons, a score or two of red-herrings, and a barrow of hearth-stones, in a lottery consisting of forty members at 6d. each. On one occasion, a gray-headed old man came to us with tears in his eyes, to ask if we would join a raffle for his donkey, cart, and harness. It seemed that his favourite grandson—a youth of precocious genius, with sharp round eyes—had involved himself in difficulties with certain roots and flowers which he had spontaneously transplanted from a gentleman's garden to his own back-yard. The requisite number of members was soon obtained, and the fortunate winner about to drive off with his prize, when the old man displayed so much emotion at parting with an old and faithful servant, that the new owner relinquished his claim upon the animal, and gave him up to his old master, only reserving to himself the right to an occasional ride, which was granted with much cordiality, it being understood that the rider was to find his own saddle.

We should be sorry if any one supposed there was not a vast amount of real destitution in our low neighbourhood. Doubtless there were many who struggled hard to keep the black wolf at bay. Yet notwithstanding the numerous fast-days which we observed in our low neighbourhood—inasmuch as it is a 'poor heart

that never rejoices'—so the very poorest heart amongst us did sometimes crow like chanticleer over a luscious supper of roast pork and baked potatoes. The consumption of periwinkles, fried fish, and wheiks, was at all times prodigious; but it was in the unhallowed flesh of swine that we all most loved to revel when celebrating any great festival. When we first went to live in the neighbourhood, we were startled to find so many pork-butchers, and still more astonished to behold the mountains of pease-pudding and summer-cabbages, which added their brilliant charms to the dusky beauty of a certain mysterious composition called faggots, having much the aspect of charred wood immersed in Thames water (taken at Blackfriars' Bridge), but the precise ingredients of which the most expert analytical chemist of our acquaintance had failed to discover.

Without being unduly inquisitive, we could not avoid, during our residence in the low neighbourhood, acquiring some knowledge of our neighbours and their affairs. The morose old man in the red worsted night-cap, who lived in our front attic, we discovered had been a plantation overseer in the West Indies, where he was singularly unfortunate, having been dismissed for flogging to death one of his employer's most valuable slaves. He had since acted as turnkey at Bridewell and drover at Smithfield, but had lost both appointments from certain infirmities of temper, which were strongly marked on his swarthy visage. He was related by marriage to an Irish baronet of large property, from whom he received an allowance, which was regularly paid through the baronet's solicitor in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. His whole life now seemed one prolonged growl. We have heard him overhead, in the dead of night, growling in his sleep; and always felt a cold shiver come over us as we thought of the fearful visions which that old man's unquiet conscience was probably holding communion with.

A sinister-looking fellow in a velvetene-coat, who occupied the back-attic, was always somehow or other mixed up with dogs, by whom accompanied, he used to go every morning to the Royal Exchange. He once got into trouble by selling a lady a large *rat*, dressed up to imitate a French poodle, but which, when taken home, betrayed its origin by running up the wainscoting, and squeaking in a very unpoodle-like fashion!

Another ill-favoured personage we often encountered was a tall flat-headed elderly man, who always wore a dingy round canvas-frock and ankle-boots. He had been a notorious resurrectionist in George III.'s time, and had lost one of his fingers, in consequence of which he went by the sobriquet of 'Obi; or, Three-fingered Jack.' He always seemed more or less intoxicated, and would stagger along the streets clutching at every one who came near him. All carefully avoided this man's touch, and he used to frighten the children dreadfully with his Zamiel-like attitudes and gestures. The lowest inhabitant of our very low neighbourhood avoided his society; and when he was killed one windy night by the fall of the wretched hovel in which he dwelt, it was some time before labourers could be got to dig him out of the ruins—the Irish particularly regarded it as a judgment upon one who had so often violated the sanctuary of the tomb.

We had often remarked a pleasant-looking, fresh-complexioned man, with a fine Roman nose, a New-market coat, and short drab gaiters, who frequently came to visit a poor old bedridden woman, who occupied the best parlour in our commodious domicile. At first, we took him for a farmer and grazier, and were rather surprised to hear that he belonged to the thimblebrig fraternity, and was known on every race-course in the kingdom. Passing him one day in the alley, he politely handed us our pocket-handkerchief, which we had unconsciously dropped—so it had he said; but when we mentioned the circumstance to our sagacious friend the policeman, he laughed, and told us that he who restored

us our handkerchief had himself cleverly whipped it out of our pocket, his object being to gain our good opinion, with what ulterior object time might possibly reveal. The old woman, it seemed, was his mother, whom he regularly supplied with money, till, somehow or other, he fell into difficulties, when she had to be removed to the workhouse, where she died.

A short round-shouldered man, with large goggle-eyes and an ogre-like mouth, who vegetated in the back-kitchen, we were much interested in. He always disappeared from his lodgings about the beginning of April, and returned about the end of November. By dint of inquiry, we learned that he was an acting-clown (not one of Shakspeare's, but Richardson's); and, with his son—a little bandy-legged fellow, with eyes and mouth very much like his own—visited most of the country fairs, where his waggery and grimacing made him immensely popular. In the winter, he employed himself in making toasting-forks out of old parasol-handles, which he sold in the streets, with patent save-alls and the poor man's roasting-jack. He was a sombre-looking person off the stage; and on Sundays displayed a white cravat, in which he attended a very small chapel, where he always stood with his hat in his hand, and seemed very attentive; but we never heard of his dropping anything into the plate at the door.

The most noteworthy character in our neighbourhood, however, was the keeper of the leviathan lodging-house. He had originally been a Thames bargeman; and, though he could neither read nor write, and did not much esteem those who were better off in that respect, his knowledge of life, great bodily strength, inexhaustible energy and dauntless resolution, enabled him to carry on his business with wonderful success. The house where he let out beds, at prices ranging from twopence to fivepence per night, was a large dilapidated mansion, built and once inhabited by a lord-keeper of Queen Elizabeth's, and which had been in Chancery for more than half a century before its present occupant took possession, which he did quietly, and without asking leave from any one. He paid no rent, and set at defiance both the law and the lawyers, who, having no good title of their own, in vain endeavoured to eject him. His income from the lodging-house, and a public-house adjoining, which he occupied, could not have been less than L.800 per annum. His wife, it was reported, was the inmate of a private lunatic asylum; and he had two daughters at a boarding-school in France. When he required literary or epistolary assistance, he employed one of his lodgers, a university man, who had published something about Xenophon, and now rested on his laurels. The patron was not overliberal, and seemed to despise his classical secretary for his indolence and love of intoxicating drinks.

If there were some prepossessing qualities which we did not expect to meet with in a very low neighbourhood, there were others of an opposite kind for which we were fully prepared, and among these was a propensity for quarrelling with or without the slightest provocation. There were two women with sharp elbows, whose custom always in the afternoon was to attack one another from opposite first-floor windows with terrific vehemence. On these occasions, it has been our privilege to listen to dialogues, which, for pungent sarcasm, happiness of repartee, and cutting personalities, were well deserving of attention. Almost perfect as works of art, you might have taken them for readings from old comedies, reminding us occasionally now of the style of Congreve, now of Cibber, while they had this advantage over the works of those dramatists—they always commanded a numerous and delighted auditory. At first, when summoned to these lingual tournaments, we were nervously apprehensive that his then majesty's most sacred peace would be rudely violated; but as we gained experience, we found that although the gentle

sex seemed terribly in earnest, there was really no vindictive feeling present, their principal motive for scandalising our very low neighbourhood being to display their proficiency in vituperative eloquence.

The sanitary condition of our neighbourhood was about as bad as ignorance and indolence combined could make it. Neither scavenger nor water-cart ever came to reason it out of its morbid aversion to purity. In every alley there was a chartered dust-heap, interspersed with animal and vegetable refuse, including sprats and cats. The office of parish doctor was therefore no sinecure, and had he performed his duties to their fullest extent, he would have been at least L.100 annually out of pocket by his speculation. Being a prudent practitioner, however, he employed a skilful assistant, at L.20 a year, who took charge of the whole parish; and as in the most critical case he seldom exhibited any more potent medicine than saffron-water, or the *placebo* of a bread-pill, it could not be said that the sufferings of his patients were needlessly aggravated by rash treatment.

The *laissez-faire* system, so successfully pursued by our parish doctor, was carried out with increased vigour, so to speak, by the parties who undertook to administer to the spiritual necessities of our low neighbourhood. Looking at the site of the parsonage-house, a damp, smoke-dried church-yard, bounded on one side by an overflowing black ditch, and on the other by the work-house wall, the penalty, if any, for non-residents seemed to be less dreaded by incumbents than the ague and fever, which would certainly have attended its evasion. No wonder, therefore, that the rector of our parish had an additional living in Lincolnshire, from whence—at least so it was whispered about—he secretly sent presents of game to the vestry-clerk and upper churchwarden. His pastoral duties in our low neighbourhood, therefore, necessarily devolved upon his curate, a man of vast learning, who was always to be found, when wanted by his poor parishioners, in the reading-room of the British Museum. One day, being in a room adjoining that of an old woman at whose bedside they were attending professionally, we overheard a very animated argument between our curate and the young parish doctor, the subject being the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls, in which our curate severely rated his opponent for what he termed his pantheistic tendencies. All, however, passed off pleasantly; the doctor and the divine retiring together in perfect good-humour, though for some time we were in momentary fear that our curate would have darted off in a huff, he being, like many great Greek scholars, highly explosive and impatient of contradiction.

The mortality in our neighbourhood, as appeared by the returns of the Registrar-general, was not exceeded by that of any parish in England. Fever was never absent from us, and funerals, in the height of summer, were almost literally things of daily occurrence. The rapid business-like manner in which our funerals—nearly all of them parochial undertakings—were conducted, occasioned us some little surprise till we became accustomed to it. The duty of 'mourner' was, in cases of emergency, performed by deputy—at least so we learned from a poor simple-looking fellow who supplied us with water-cresses. He told us that he was passing one of the houses in our alley where several deaths had recently taken place, when the closed shutters were gently pushed open, and some one, whose face he could not see, softly desired him to come in. On entering the room from whence this whispered summons proceeded, he was addressed by a pallid and half-famished-looking man, who was standing beside a small parish coffin, the only furniture in the apartment, and which he told our informant contained the last of his three children, who had within as many weeks died of typhus fever. He further stated that he was in trouble, L.2 reward having been

offered for his apprehension. Being therefore afraid to venture out, he asked the water-cress dealer, as the undertaker was expected almost immediately, to follow the child for him, which our informant, out of pure charity, accordingly did; and on his return was himself arrested, charged with having stolen some lead from the roof of a house at Brixton, and had to lie in prison all night before he could prove his innocence.

After several years' absence, we recently went in search of the very low neighbourhood with which our erratic disposition had once made us so strangely familiar. We looked, but saw it not. The very atmosphere which it once breathed and tainted had lost, as our grateful senses testified, all remembrance of its unpleasant existence. Metropolitan improvements, model lodging-houses, ragged-schools, baths and lavatories, penny savings-banks and temperance-halls, had evidently conspired against it, and taken forcible possession of the territory where it so long ingloriously reigned. The press, that zealous antagonist of corruption in every shape, political, moral, and physical, had done much to bring about this healthy state of things, and like a wart on a child's hand, the unsightly excrescence, a very low neighbourhood, had disappeared for ever beneath repeated applications of ink.

A VISIT TO A GULLERY.

Of the many species of birds which attract our attention and excite our admiration, none possess for me so great a charm as the sea-birds. I love to watch their graceful motions as they soar on wide-extended pinion, or repose on the waves, rising and falling with the swell. I like to see them when floating in the bright sunshine, and still more when, under a dark stormy sky, they hover over the troubled ocean, touching lovingly the white crests of the billows, and seeming to rejoice in the storm. A distant sight is frequently all we can obtain of these denizens of the air and water, their nests being placed on lonely rocks or unapproachable heights; and thus, although the safety of the eggs and young birds is secured, we are deprived of an important part of the domestic history of the sea-birds. A few exceptions to this remark may be found, especially in the case of the black-headed gull (*Larus rhodendrus*), which, although it dwells by the sea in winter, comes inland in summer, to build its nest and rear its young. The spots which these birds choose for their nests are not very numerous; those of which I have heard are about thirty miles from the sea. There used to be a 'gullery,' as a colony of sea-gulls is called, at Norbury, in Staffordshire, on an island in the middle of a large pool; and another is still in existence at Scoulton Mere, in Norfolk: no others, with the exception of a small one on a broad, or turn of the river Yare, have I heard of. These gulleries had been described to me as very interesting, and being in the neighbourhood of the one at Scoulton, I resolved to visit it. It was a lovely afternoon in May; the scenery, though not picturesque, was pretty from the evidence it gave of cultivation and plenty; the trees were freshly come into leaf, the grass and the fields of young wheat were a vivid green; by the roadside was the prickly furze, with its rich golden blossoms; and all looked gay in a bright sunshine. The lark sang as it flattered in the air; the copes were musical with the song of birds; and on approaching the Mere, we saw large flocks of gulls following the plough in the fields, and picking up the grubs and worms in the freshly-turned earth. Some of these birds were fluttering about, others coming or returning, but in such confused numbers that it seemed as if the whole colony had sallied forth to meet us. On arriving at the Mere, we left the carriage, and entering a wood, walked down a shady path, bordered with lofty pine and fir trees, between the tall stems of which were glimpses of the

bright blue water and the verdant islands on its bosom. Quitting the road, we turned up a little bypath, and soon came upon the edge of the Mere, at a spot where some rustic benches were placed, and we sat down to admire the delightful view. Before I describe the gulls, let me say a few words on the spot they have chosen for their temporary abode.

The Mere, which is a mile in circumference, is completely surrounded by a belt of wood, the dark foliage of the fir and pine beautifully contrasting with the light green of the young sycamore-leaves, and the graceful foliage and silvery stems of the birch, the queen of the woods. At our feet lay the expanse of water, studded with green bowery islands, and on one of them a little rustic summer-house, with its tall flag-staff. But in the centre of the Mere was the great attraction. A large, low rushy island, covered with reeds, and with some clumps of willows, is the spot especially chosen by the gulls for their nests. Thousands of the birds were flying over the reeds or hovering on the water, their black heads forming a pleasing contrast to their light-gray and white bodies, which shone in the sunlight. Sometimes a gull would rise from its nest in the reeds and fly off, whilst another would settle in its place; and high in the air was a constant stream of the feathered population, either flying off in search of food or returning to the island. Flocks of gulls were gracefully swimming in the water; and just in front of us were two, flying in circles about a beautiful swan, sweeping round and above its head, and uttering their loud harsh cry; whilst two dusky coot, rising from an island and flying across the Mere, raised a great commotion among the exclusive colony by which it is tenanted. The noise made by the gulls was surprising: it continued without intermission during our visit; and although the cry of a single bird is harsh and inharmonious, yet that of thousands, more especially when softened by distance, was far from unpleasant. The rushing wings was like the noise of falling water, and, uniting with their cries, produced a sound unlike anything I had ever heard before.

We now continued our walk round the Mere, coming to thickets of rhododendron—which would soon look splendid in blossom—then to dense masses of laurel; while ribes and other shrubs skirted the path, and on the water floated the broad leaves and delicate white buds of the water-lily—while ever and anon a passing gull threw its dark shadow over the clear river, and wheeled screaming above our heads. At length we came very near the island, and had a good view of the birds sitting on their nests, which are composed of weeds placed on mounds of earth in the marshy places. The nests were shallow, and sometimes two birds appeared to occupy the same nest. The eggs, which are of a deep olive colour, sprinkled with large brown and black spots, are much esteemed for the table, being considered equal to those of the lapwing, for which they are frequently sold. When boiled, the yolk becomes solid, while the white remains a clear jelly: they are eaten cold. Six men are employed to collect the eggs, which is done three times a week, when between 2000 and 3000 are obtained: the eggs are packed in moss, and sent to different markets, or to such private families as have ordered them. The birds lay four or five eggs each; and the number of gulls may be inferred from the fact, that besides the eggs left to hatch, an average season produces more than 30,000 eggs, and in one prolific season 44,000 were collected. A canoe made of a single piece of wood, and sharply pointed at the ends, was moored to the island; this was used by the keepers in pushing among the reeds to reach the nests. Where the canoe cannot be used, the men walk with water-boots; but in some parts it is too swampy to admit of either alternative, and the birds possess their eggs and nests undisturbed.

The gulls come inland in March, begin to lay in April, and do not take leave till July, when the young ones are able to accompany them. There seemed to be a constant changing and moving going on among the birds on the nests, which, I should think, would subside during the hatching. The noise at this place was very great; and we could distinguish two cries—one loud and harsh, that of the birds on the wing; the other more inward, a kind of low murmuring, kept up by those on the nests. In addition to the grubs, worms, and other insects found in the fields, the gulls feed upon small fish; but although watching their movements, I did not observe any engaged in fishing: they seemed, whilst in the water, principally occupied with washing, which they did very gracefully; afterwards they cleaned their feathers, arranged their plumage, and then swam about apparently for mere pleasure. In former times, the young gulls were esteemed among the delicacies of the table; and in the Household Book of the fifth Earl of Northumberland, begun in 1512, these 'see-gulles' are for the principal feasts, or the earl's own table, and are charged at one penny or three-halfpence each: large numbers of them were fattened for sale; but I am not aware that they are ever eaten now. The flight of the sea-gulls is very graceful; they have the long wings peculiar to sea-birds, but seem equally at their ease in the air, on the land, and in the water.

After spending some time in watching the gullery, we came away, and, continuing our course, disturbed two fine swans resting on the green-sward; the long grass was pressed down by their weight, and they seemed in no haste to take to the water. Presently a squirrel ran up a tall pine; and when we turned from the Mere, and the sound of the gulls grew faint in the distance, the wood-pigeons cooed over our heads, whilst the thrush and black-bird made the copse musical with their notes. An idea of cruelty being a necessary accompaniment to the study of natural history, deters many persons from pursuing it; but in reality all they require to know of the habits of birds or animals can be attained without the sacrifice of life or happiness to any creature. We had seen the gulls in their domestic life, we had admired their beautiful abode, we had learned something of their habits, and not one among them had become a victim to our curiosity, or had any reason to regret our visit to Scoulton Gullery.

A LETTER FROM AMERICA.

CARHAGE, HANNAH COUNTY, PA., 27th August 1853.

I HAVE lately come pretty often across your Journal, and a pretty considerably clever kind of a Journal it is generally allowed to be, considering that most of it is only written by the British, who, I reckon, to go by the judgment of our citizens, considered prime critics by ourselves, do not come quite up to our standard. You do have sometimes extracts from American writers, such as Fanny Fern, and others; but I never saw anything in your columns by Tom Honeysuckle, who writes for the *Athens Eagle*, or by Alice Cowslip, who does all the poetry for the *Carmansville Trumpet*, or other really good standard authors of these parts. I tell you, we read your magazine pretty regular, as I borrow it generally from Dick Allen, who gets it loaned down to Sparta, which is a flourishing village, where he trades for his lumber; and I thought you might not be displeased to get my ideas on the subject, as it might enlighten you, and get you into the way of procuring some rare things for your Journal. 'Allah il Allah,' say the Turks, 'and Mohammed is his prophet.' 'Ours is a great country,' say we United-States-of-Americans, for without using any superlative, we are perfectly convinced that it can't be beat nohow, and

that it can't be dittoed neither. Well, without referring to the New York Crystal Palace, in search of further testimonials of this truth; without pointing to Colt's revolvers in support of it, as we do not wish to rile the British public unnecessarily (for how often has not this same revolver been pointed at the breast of any doubter of the Yankee shot coming nearest the bull's-eye at the Great Exhibition of London); without calling to our aid Day and Newell's locks, to lock up every pair of lips wishing to dispute our ability to 'take the shine out of all creation'; without trying to reap any more glory by McCormick's reapers; in fact, without any more asserting, that we are some pumpkins; I will, with your permission, shew you that, besides in everything else, also in—literature, 'ours is a great country.' A poet, in a recent number of Putnam's, sings, addressing Mr Bull—

And if we make no minsters, John, nor epics, yet the Fates
Are not entirely deaf to men who can build ships and states;
I waive the literary point, contented with observing,
That I like Hawthorne, Longfellow, Emerson, Bryant,
Irving—

That's the way one's country is undervalued and put down a notch by one's own fellow-citizens. He waives the literary point! he does! Well, I don't; and I will shew you why not before I get through. I don't know but I am willing to allow that in the matter of writing and printing books, the antiquated nations of Europe go ahead of us, if not in quality yet in quantity, and as we can afford to be magnanimous, we will leave this point understood as conceded. But, do books represent the literature of our country?—No. Do our youths and maidens learn wisdom to uphold and perfect our glorious institutions from books?—No; for a great many of them never open one after they have left school. Do our citizens generally read books?—No; for they have not got time. Then, what makes us the great people in literature that we are?—Answer, that mighty engine the press, that bulwark of our free institutions, our free and untrammelled press, in which every man, woman, and child of genius, can express his, her, or its sentiments. If you want to know how a free people think, feel, and act, take up any daily newspaper, and wherever you cast your eye, it will rest upon a pearl. Take us where we are least prepared to contend with criticism; take us in those effusions that are sometimes concocted in the hurry of the moment, to meet an immediate personal want: I mean, read our advertisements; and if you are not struck with the purity of style, elevation of sentiment, and correctness of ideas and grammar, you must be blinded by British prejudice.

You will allow that people ought to get married, and what could be more appropriate than to try in this manner?—

A WIFE WANTED.—A young lady of not more than thirty-five years of age, intelligent, amiable, affectionate, and respectable looking, American, English, French, German, or Italian. The subscriber is a man of twenty-seven years, intelligent, enterprising, ambitious, good-looking, amiable, genteel, affectionate, temperate, virtuous, and proud. Was never married. He has been in the jewellery business eight years. Lost most of his money by a fire. He is very desirous to become a husband and father; and would marry a lady if there was mutual attachment, and be everything a kind husband could be—provided the lady could loan him 5000 or 10,000 dollars to start in business again. He has the best of references; is from a good family, and an American. Notes addressed to T. S. FRANKLIN, New York Post-office, stating where an interview can be had, will be strictly confidential.

Or take this plain American carpenter, who tells an unvarnished tale with a foot-rule in his manly hand:—

WIFE WANTED.—By a young man twenty-three years of age; height 5 feet 10 inches; dark hair and eyes; carpenter by trade, and at present in good circumstances. Wishes to unite in a marriage with a lady whose age is less than his own; height that would be preferred, 5 feet 6 inches; fair complexion; blue eyes; hair black or auburn; shoulders rather broad, and of well-developed form; hands and feet moderately small. She must be intelligent, and one who can reciprocate the kindness of a devoted husband. Any lady answering the description, who is desirous of an acquaintance, will please address

JOHN S. MASON, Hartford, Ct.

Now, our ladies have not often occasion to advertise for husbands, but when they do, it is in this straightforward style:—

An American lady, seventeen years of age, well-educated, and of aristocratic connections, is desirous of forming an alliance with a gentleman of fortune. She cares not whether he is young, handsome, or an American, if he possesses a handsome fortune and a kind heart. Any gentleman possessing these, and desirous of forming an acquaintance with the lady, will please address the undersigned at South Groton, Mass.

IDA GREY.

What would be more likely to effect its object than this touching appeal?—

300 DOLLARS.—Can it be possible—can it be true, that a widow lady, of the first respectability, being reduced in circumstances, is obliged to advertise thus to know if she can be so fortunate as to meet with a gentleman who would advance her the above amount, for which she will, in return, give a pleasant room and good board for one year? Address M. L. H., Union Square Post-office.

Or who would not be sure to go and board with this small family, who offer plenty of plain food, cooked neatly, without children, particularly as there is a grate for the month of August?—

BOARD.—Who wants a quiet pleasant home for the summer? A neat room with grate, on second floor, may be engaged this week, and a large room on first floor after first of April, each suitable for two gentlemen, with breakfast and tea, with plenty of neatly-cooked plain food, with a small family without children. Apply to Mrs SPENCER, No. 114 Greene Street, near Prince.

If anybody wants to send his things to auction, wouldn't you tell him to go to 59 Beekman Street?

LOOK WILD!—Forty thousand loads, or less, of household furniture, from as many different families, and from every section of the city, has recently been concentrated in one grand centre, No. 59 Beekman Street, and will be disposed of, according to law, this day (Thursday), May 5, 1853, at 10½ o'clock A.M. Among the wreck of matter and crush of cities that annually occur in Gotham, and that will be exhibited on this occasion, all the various countries and continents will be fully represented, viz.: carpets from Brussels and Turkey; wardrobes for princes and wardrobes for plebeians; secretaries of state and secretaries of treasury; bureaux of peace and bureaux of war; cabinets of weal and cabinets of woe; together with curiosities from New Zealand, New Mexico, and New Jersey; beds of down, and beds to be knocked down; mirrors that cast no sad reflection, and mirrors that reflect severely upon the manufacturer; music upon the piano, and music upon the pots and kettles. The whole to be exhibited, and the happiness and misery they have imparted dilated upon. Such another combination of talent will not be seen for a twelvemonth. Discussion and argument must be brief, and of the knock-down order. Bills of the performance may be expected. Doors open at 8 o'clock; performance to commence at 10½. Tickets for gentlemen and two ladies, free; children, half-price. Stands will be provided for those who do not require chairs. N.B.—If Barnum should be there to manage, Root will be there to

daguerreotype the scene. Programme will commence in the second story.

Or if you have a cold, as you must have in your horrid climate, wouldn't you send to Mrs Jervis?

The rust of winter is being brightened by the peeping green, as the sap of spring is invited by the sun's warm smile; but is the rust of a December blight on poor human lungs and throat so chased away? Is the corroding damp on bright health, that dates its chill back in dark January, so covered with young life as my little grass-plot in the yard, which has its medicine in a shower to-day and a sun-burst to-morrow? You who have caught a mildew from a searching mould, that sends its fungus through the crack of a door, or clutches with its clammy fingers the nape of your neck, chilling your velvet skin to cold parchment—you who are in despair for a shower or a sun-burst to give you the pouting life of my lilac-bush, know that Mrs Jervis's Cold Candy has only been dozing, not sleeping (by not advertising much lately), in the confident goodwill of its patrons. Its truthful ministrations are a good institution, and should be enrolled as such, being necessary to alleviate the pulmonary distresses of our climate. For coughs, colds, hoarseness, &c., it is everywhere admitted excellent. Sold by Mrs W. JERVIS, 366 Broadway; Zieber, Philadelphia; and by druggists generally.

The following second-sight is truly astonishing:—

SECOND-SIGHT.—The marvellous powers possessed by Heller, the Necromancer, have attracted much attention lately. A few evenings since, at one of his exhibitions, a gentleman produced a card from his pocket, and, concealing it in his hand, asked what it was. Heller replied: 'A printed card.' The gentleman then asked what was printed upon it, when the Necromancer instantly answered: 'T. SMITH, Jr., Clothing Establishment, No. 102 Fulton Street, New York;' which was correct.

Now, my friend Allen was very badly treated, and I advised him to make his wrongs public; if you will read the following, you won't know whether more to pity his misfortunes, or to admire the clear and lucid way he states them:—

All persons indebted to Richard Allen are invited to make some arrangement with him either for compromise or payment. I need all that I have lent or laboured to own; had I been paid for my labour and money lent, I would not give such hints at this time. I lent and squandered my money, with the help of dishonest lawyers, until I am driven by my friends to tell where my money has gone. I will tell all that is due to me, and how it became due, and how long it is due. One is an endorsement of 200 dollars; another is for labour done by the month, thirty years ago; another is a debt I paid for a person twenty-two years ago; since this person owns a brick-house in this city, and I don't know how many more, two in Ohio. I want all these persons to either call or write as soon as possible. If there is no attention paid to this warning, I shall make the case as plain as possible afterwards. I live at 560 Eighth Avenue.

I will finish off with a choice bit of poetry. Nobody will deny that this is original; none of your imitation stuff after Byron, Scott, or other worn-out European poets:—

A woman that says she is my wife—

She tells a lie—to last her life;

She never knew morality,

But trespass and rascality.

She robs the cow, and breaks her jaw,

To anger me and others;

Even her charming smile ye toyle

Is like the grass that withers.

E. H. L. KURTZ, No. 300 East Broadway.

And now, Mr Editor, do not think that these pieces are picked. If you believe that they will instruct and enlighten your people, I can send you plenty more; for to-day I must close. Yours respectfully,

JONATHAN W. BEDSTEAD.

MOONSTRUCK.

It is a moor
Barren and treeless: lying high and bare
Beneath the pale-arched sky. The rushing winds
Fly over it, each with his quiver slung,
And strong bow bent, and whistling arrows keen.

I am a woman, lonely, old, and poor.
If there be any one that watches me
(But there is none) adown the long blank wold,
My image painted on the level sky
Would rise, and startle him as 'twere a ghost.
And like a ghost, a weary wandering ghost,
Whose frail and bodiless essence sharp blasts tear,
I roam, and roam, and shiver through the dark—
That will not hide me—

O for one still hour—
One blessed hour of warm dew-laden night
To wrap me like a pall! with not an eye
In earth or heaven to pierce the black serene.—

Night, call ye this?—No night!—No dark—no rest!—
A moon-ray sweeps down from the clouded sky,
And strikes the moor.—

Is't thou, accursed Thing?
Broad, pallid, like a great wo looming out
From its sealed grave—filling all earth, all heaven,
With a dead ghastly smile. Art there again,
Round, perfect, large, as when we buried thee—
I and the merciful clouds, that heard my prayers.

I'll sit me down, and eye thee face to face,
Mine enemy!

Why didst thou rise upon
My world? Who called thee from the unknown void
Below the earth, to make me mad? Wherefore
Didst thou steal forth, a little tremulous curve
Hung out in the gray sunset beautifully
To catch mine eyes—then night by night to grow,
Slow orbing, till thy wide, blank, cruel glare
Hunts me across the world?

No rest—no dark!
Hour after hour, that passionless stern face
Climbs up the desolate blue.

I will press down
The lids on my dazed eyeballs—crouch to the dust,
And pray.—

Thank God—thank God! A kindly cloud
Has stretched its dusky handbreadth from the vast
Obscure, and hid my torturer. The night
Is free. Forth peep the merry twinkling stars:
Ah! we'll shine out, the little silly stars
And I; we'll dance and sing across the moor,
They up in heaven—I here. At last—at last
We are avenged of our adversary!

The freshening of the night-air feels like dawn.
Who said that I was mad, or halt, or blind?
I will arise and lift my burden off,
And march with airy step across the wolds.—
What! stumbling? Ah! no fear. No fear, kind stars;
I am used unto the dark: companionless
Steering athwart the dun moor's trackless waves,
To where, deep sunk in vales of white-wreathed mist,
The pleasant home-lights shine.

I will but pause,
And turning, gaze—
O God! O merciful God!
The cloud-bank overbrims. Sudden outpours
The bright white moon-flood.—Ah, I drown! I drown!
And o'er the whirl, with pitiless motion slow,
It walketh—my inexorable Doom.

No more. I will not struggle any more;
I will lie down as quiet as a child:
I can but die.

There:—I have hid my face:
Night-travellers passing o'er the silent wold

Would only cry: 'She sleeps; night-angels say:
'She prays.'

Glare on, inevitable Doom!
I will not look at thee; and if at times
I shiver, 'tis no speech—no plaint—no moan.

Was that sharp whistling wind the morning breeze
That calls the stars back to the fold of heaven?
I am very cold.—And yet I feel a change:
The arrowy moon-rays smite my brain less fierce;
My heart beats slower, duller; pleasant rest,
Like a soft garment, winds my trembling limbs.—
If I looked up now, should I see it still
Gibbeted ghastly in the quiet sky?
Ha!—

It is very strange: all things seem strange.
Pale spectral face, I do not fear thee now.
Was't thou, poor shadow, that did haunt me once
Like an avenging fiend? Well, we fade out
Together: I'll nor dread nor curse thee more.

How calm all seems! I know the brightening moor
Is thick with dew-stars. I will try and turn
Eastward.—

Poor dim eyes, close not yet. That light
Fringing the far hills—all so fair, so fair—
Is't not the dawn?—I am dying; but 'tis dawn.
'Upon the mountains I behold the feet
Of my beloved—let us forth to meet'—
Death!

This is death. I see the dawn no more—
I sleep.

But, like a morning-bird, my soul
Goes singing up into the depths of God,
Through His new worlds to track the infinite Day.

FORGET-ME-NOT.

The Forget-me-not, that beautiful little flower of memory,
with its blue, like the tint of the summer heavens, and its
golden eye, bright as the eye of Hope herself, is consecrated
not alone to the reminiscences of love, but also to those of
home and friendship. The field forget-me-not, or *Myosotis*
arensis, is often assumed as the token-flower; but the
true one is the water forget-me-not, *Myosotis palustris*,
whose flower is rather larger, and more intensely blue than
that of its sister of the fields. The legendary origin of its
name proves the claim of the aquatic species to be the real
blossom of remembrance. A German knight and his
lady-love were walking on the banks of the Danube, when
the fair one saw a beautiful tuft of the *Myosotis palustris*
growing in the water, and expressed a wish to have it.
The knight, with due chivalrous alacrity, plunged at once
into the river, in all his array, and gathered his prize; but
before he could again climb up the steep and slippery
bank, he was drawn by a treacherous eddy into a deep
pool, and encumbered as he was, finding he could not save
himself, just as he sank he threw the flowers ashore to his
mistress, and uttered with his last breath: '*Vergiss mein*
nicht!' (Forget me not!)—*Dublin University Magazine.*

DRUNK FOR TWENTY YEARS.

A government clerk, who, too habitually intoxicated to
perform his duties, was pensioned recently, died a few days
ago at his lodgings in Albury Street, Regent's Park. His
landlord informed the coroner that, during all the time that
the deceased had lived with him, a period of twenty years,
he had never seen him one day sober, except Sundays. On
Sundays he would barely taste drink, but dressed himself
up in such things as he had, and would go regularly to
church.—*Civil Service Gazette.*

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